



**Indianapolis**  
Gregory A. Ballard, Mayor

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **MAYOR DETAILS \$740 MILLION IN TAXPAYER SAVINGS FOR MODIFIED COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW CONSENT DECREE**

*Plan is latest in series of major achievements delivering savings, improved neighborhoods and quality of life to residents of Indianapolis*

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today detailed plans to save Indianapolis residents \$740 million and provide cleaner waterways faster than originally planned. During a meeting of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee this morning, the Mayor discussed the savings ratepayers will realize from the city's modifications to the Consent Decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). In addition to the savings, the improvements will divert ahead of schedule 3.5 billion gallons of sewage from polluting local waterways.

"Indianapolis was the first city in the nation to successfully renegotiate its agreement with the EPA. This announcement will save hundreds of millions of dollars for our residents, improve the environment and strengthen the city's position as a great place to do business," said Mayor Ballard.

The Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Consent Decree is an agreement between the City and the EPA and IDEM, under which Indianapolis developed and is executing a 20-year plan to curb the overflow of raw sewage from combined sewers into waterways. At Mayor Ballard's direction, the Indianapolis Department of Public Works (DPW) assessed the decree's cost-overruns and through value engineering achieved the modification plan, which will allow the City to meet the required Consent Decree performance criteria and 2025 timeline but in a more cost-effective manner.

"With these improvements, we can revise project schedules to increase capacity at the treatment plant as more overflows are captured, prevent more sewage from reaching our rivers and streams earlier, and use more cost-effective strategies," said DPW Director David Sherman.

The EPA, IDEM and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) approved the plan on June 3. Final approval by the courts is required. The plan will modify 14 of the 32 Consent Decree control measures, provide new projects

including pump stations, and change schedules and operational aspects to capture overflows earlier than initially planned.

“Like our community’s streets, bridges and sidewalks, our sewer system is a component of Indianapolis’ infrastructure that is woefully outdated and in need of repairs,” said Bill Blomquist, president of the Infrastructure Advisory Commission. “I am very pleased to see CSO as a priority and one that is being tackled as aggressively as other major infrastructure needs.”

The Consent Decree requires that, by 2025, the city capture and treat 97 percent of the sewage overflows in the Fall Creek watershed and 95 percent in the White River watershed in a typical year. By 2025, overflows will be allowed to occur during two storms per year on Fall Creek and four storms per year on White River and other waterways, in a typical year.

“It is very much in the interest of the business community, as well as that of every resident and organization in Marion County, that we address the sewage overflow issue aggressively,” said Deborah Daniels, chairperson of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee. “I am gratified to see Mayor Ballard and his administration making these tremendous strides with efficiency – getting more done than planned, in less time, at lower cost.”

In addition to its environmental and economic impact, the plan will help improve neighborhoods through design and construction of co-functional buildings and improvements at sites around the city including Juan Solomon Park and Coffin Golf Course. The plan has earned recognition from the EPA and other national organizations. Mayor Ballard presented details of the plan at the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCOM) Water Committee in June and the American Water Summit in November and will travel to Washington, D.C., next week to present the City’s major infrastructure improvements to an audience of national leaders at the USCOM Water Summit.

### **Citywide Tunnel System to Capture Sewage Overflows Years Ahead of Schedule**

Currently, when Indianapolis experiences as little as a quarter inch of rain, combined sewers reach capacity and raw sewage overflows into local rivers and streams. To address raw sewage overflows, the City’s Consent Decree requires a citywide storage tunnel system in which wastewater will be stored until space is available at the city’s two wastewater treatment plants – Belmont Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWT) Plant or Southport AWT Plant.

The citywide tunnel system will be comprised of five tunnels: the Deep Rock Tunnel Connector (formerly the Interplant Connection), Fall Creek, White River, Pleasant Run and Lower Pogues Run. The tunnel system will have the capacity to store 250 million gallons of raw sewage during large storm events and will significantly reduce raw sewage overflows. The tunnel system will address combined sewer overflow locations throughout Indianapolis by serving as a more integrated, underground storage facility for sewage.

The Deep Rock Tunnel Connector, which will extend from the Southport AWT Plant at Southport Road and Tibbs Avenue to north of the Belmont AWT Plant near the White River and Harding Street, will be the first phase of the tunnel system. From the Deep Rock Tunnel Connector, the four remaining storage tunnels will be extended along White River, Fall Creek, Pleasant Run and Pogues Run.

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